

British Museum (Natural History)



BRITISH BUTTERFLIES

SERIES No. 7

5 Cards in Colour

Set E 24

One Shilling



a



b



c



d

BRITISH BUTTERFLIES

(a, b) Large Blue (*Lycaena arion*) Male and Female
(c, d) Holly Blue (*Lycanopsis argiolus*) Male and Female
Natural size

BRITISH MUSEUM (NATURAL HISTORY)

POST CARD.

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MATTER

THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE
WRITTEN HERE.

PRINTED IN
GREAT
BRITAIN.



a



b



c



d



e



f

BRITISH BUTTERFLIES

- (a, b) Small Skipper (*Thymelicus flavyus*) Male and Female
 (c, d) Essex Skipper (*Thymelicus lineola*) Male and Female
 (e, f) Lulworth Skipper (*Thymelicus actaeon*) Male and Female
 Natural size

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a



b



c



d



e



h



f



g

BRITISH BUTTERFLIES

(a, b) Grizzled Skipper (*Hesperia malvae*) Male and Female

(c, d) Dingy Skipper (*Thanaos tages*) Male and Female

(e, f, g) Silver-spotted Skipper (*Pamphila comma*) Female, Male and Underside

(h) Large Skipper (*Augiades sylvanus*) Female

Natural Size

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a



d



b



e



c



f

BRITISH BUTTERFLIES

(a, b, c) Mazarine Blue (*Nomiades semiargus*) Male, Female and Underside

(d, e, f) Long-tailed Blue (*Lampides boeticus*) Male, Female and Underside

Natural size

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BRITISH BUTTERFLIES

Milkweed Butterfly (*Danaus archippus*)

Natural size

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BRITISH BUTTERFLIES.

Series No. 7.

This set includes the remainder of the British "Blues" (*Lycaenidae*) either indigenous or reputed, the remainder of the Skippers (*Hesperiidae*), and the Milkweed Butterfly, belonging to the family *Danaidae*, which on rare occasions reaches our shores.

E 136 (a) and (b) LARGE BLUE (*Lycaena arion*).

The underside of this fine species is pale grey-brown with numerous black, white-ringed spots, and is quite free from orange markings of any kind. In Britain it is a rare butterfly, only found in two or three especially favoured parts of the west country, where it is on the wing during July. Formerly it had a wider range and was said to occur as far east as Dover, and also in Buckinghamshire. Its life history was for many years an almost complete mystery. Although its egg and its young larva were known, the full-grown caterpillar had never been seen; eventually a few specimens were discovered in the nest of a certain species of ant. Further investigation showed that the caterpillar, when about half-grown, enters the nest of this particular kind of ant and completes its growth there, being tolerated by the ants, upon the young of which it feeds, in return for furnishing them with a liquid from its "honey-gland," which they highly appreciate. It passes its chrysalis stage also within the nest, usually under stones and enclosed in an earthen cell. Strange as this mode of life may sound in the case of a butterfly caterpillar, it is really by no means rare amongst the Blues. A very high percentage of their caterpillars are in some way associated with ants during the whole or part of their life.

E 136 (c) and (d) HOLLY BLUE (*Lycaenopsis argiolus*).

This pretty little species with its delicate grey underside is one of our earliest spring butterflies, and by no means rare. It is commonly to be seen flitting round the holly, privet or ivy of London gardens and squares. It has a curious habit, when settled in the sun, of rubbing the two wings on each side of the body one over the other with a barely perceptible circular movement, probably associated with the diffusion of scent from its scent-scales (*androconia*). The caterpillars which result from the spring brood normally feed upon the flowers of the ivy, producing the second brood of butterflies in July or August. These differ from the first brood, particularly in the female sex, by being more heavily marked with black. The eggs of these are laid normally upon the flowers of holly, not ivy, passing the winter as pupae or chrysalids.

On a card (E 45) of a previous set a single species of the Skippers (*Hesperiidae*) was illustrated. On the next two cards in the present set the remaining British species are figured. The complete list of indigenous Skippers is:—

	Card No.
61. Dingy Skipper (<i>Thanaos tages</i>)	E 137
62. Grizzled Skipper (<i>Hesperia malvae</i>)	E 137
63. Chequered Skipper (<i>Carterocephalus palaemon</i>)... ..	No figure
64. Lulworth Skipper (<i>Thymelicus actaeon</i>)... ..	E 138
65. Small Skipper (<i>Thymelicus flavus</i>)	E 138
66. Essex Skipper (<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>)	E 138
67. Silver-spotted Skipper (<i>Pamphila comma</i>)	E 137
68. Large Skipper (<i>Augiades sylvanus</i>)	{ E 137 E 45

It was mentioned in connection with a previous set of cards (Set E5) that the Skippers were really not true butterflies at all, and that they are sometimes regarded as forming a separate sub-order under the name *Grypocera*. There is much truth in this view, but to make them a separate sub-order is to go rather to the other extreme.

One or two species have been reported as having been found in Britain at different times, in addition to those mentioned, but they are only casual visitors and hardly worthy to be placed on the British List.

E 137 (a) and (b) GRIZZLED SKIPPER (*Hesperia malvae*).

This little species is early on the wing, sometimes being met with even at the end of April. May, however, is the best month for it, and it is rarely seen later in the year although occasionally a second brood has been met with. Variation occurs principally in the size of the pale markings on the forewing, and a variety in which those about the centre of the wing are joined together is known as *laras*. It is our only British representative of a genus which is almost world-wide in distribution, and contains many puzzling species. The caterpillar lives under a web or in a spun-up leaf, and pupates therein. In this country it feeds principally upon wild strawberry, bramble, raspberry or cinquefoil.

E 137 (c) and (d) DINGY SKIPPER (*Thanaos tages*).

Like the last species, this Skipper is on the wing principally in May, but occasionally again in August too, and is widely distributed and not at all uncommon. It is most plentiful in chalky districts, frequenting the open parts of wooded country, such as hedges and banks in warm situations. When the insect is at rest, the wings are crossed over the back after the manner of a moth, not erect over the back as in butterflies. The food plant is birds-foot trefoil, in the neighbourhood of which the caterpillar passes the winter.

E 137 (e), (f) and (g) SILVER-SPOTTED SKIPPER (*Pamphila comma*).

The Silver-spotted Skipper belongs to a group of Skippers represented abroad by an immense number of mainly tropical species, and known as the *Pamphilinae*. The male "brand" upon the centre of the forewing is a feature common to very many of them, but they never have the folded edge of the forewing (costal fold—a secondary sexual structure containing androconial scales) which characterises so many of the Skippers related to the Dingy and Grizzled Skippers. It is not a rare species, and may be found during August on most of the chalk-hills, but is not known to be present in Scotland or Ireland.

E 137 (h) LARGE SKIPPER (*Augiades sylvanus*).

The female only is shown on this card. Illustrations of the male will be found on card No. E 45. It rather closely resembles the Silver-spotted Skipper, but the blackish markings of the upperside are not so intense, and the pale spot on the underside of the hindwing not so silvery and rather indistinct.

E 138 (a) and (b) SMALL SKIPPER (*Thymelicus flavus*).

This little Skipper is probably better known under the scientific name of *Adopaea thaumas*. But as there are no very definite characters to separate *Adopaea* from *Thymelicus*, it appears better to use the older name. *Flavus* is an older name than *thaumas*. The insect is to be found in most parts of England and Wales fairly commonly, and has a marked partiality for damp situations in wooded and hilly country where the long grasses, upon which the caterpillars feed, grow luxuriantly. But it does not favour swampy localities. The male may be distinguished readily from that of the next species by the longer "brand" on its forewing. The females, however, are not readily distinguishable, but a little practice will soon enable one to tell them apart.

E 138 (c) and (d) ESSEX SKIPPER (*Thymelicus lineola*).

Although this species no doubt has always been present in this country, it was not recognised until 1888. It occurs fairly plentifully around the Thames estuary, on both banks, and has now been recognised also as existing in many more inland localities. Some of the points of difference between it and the Small Skipper have been mentioned under that species. In addition, the black undersides of the knobs of the antennae furnish a useful guide. It is on the wing in July and August.

E 138 (e) and (f) LULWORTH SKIPPER (*Thymelicus actaeon*).

First discovered in this country at Lulworth Cove in Dorset from which it takes its name, this little Skipper has since been found to occur over a not inconsiderable area east and west of that place, but always within a few miles of the coast-line, and restricted to very circumscribed areas within that area. Structurally it is almost inseparable from the other two species illustrated on this postcard, but can readily be recognised by the existence of a pattern of spots, often very faint, upon the upper surface of the forewings, especially in the female. In this country it is single-brooded, being on the wing in July and August. It has a peculiar attraction to the flowers of the rest-harrow, being very seldom found visiting any others. It is a rare species, and should be collected as little as possible.

THE CHEQUERED SKIPPER (*Carterocephalus palaemon*).

By an unfortunate oversight the only other British Skipper, *Carterocephalus palaemon*, the Chequered Skipper, has not been illustrated on these postcards. However, there is no possibility of mistaking it. In shape it resembles the Dingy Skipper and the Grizzled Skipper more than the other species and it is more nearly related to them. Its upperside is black, relieved by numerous bright yellow spots, and the underside is mainly yellow with a few small dark markings and, on the hindwing two rows, which unite anteriorly, of pearly spots. It is a rare species, being confined to certain woods in the counties of Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire, where it is to be met with flying during the month of June. It is particularly fond of visiting the flowers of ground ivy and bugle.

E 139 (a), (b) and (c) MAZARINE BLUE (*Nomiades semiargus*).

On this card we return to the Blues (*Lycaenidae*) for the purpose.

of illustrating two very rare species, one of which appears now to have died out in this country, whilst the other is only an occasional visitor.

The Mazarine Blue, sometimes known under the scientific name of *acis*, was last recorded as seen in these islands in the years 1874-77, when it was noticed in Glamorganshire. To judge by the writings of the earlier British entomologists, this attractive little butterfly must have been comparatively common at one time, for it was stated to have been met with in Norfolk, Cambridge, Yorks, Dorset, Hants, Surrey, Somerset, Warwick, Hereford, Gloucester, Monmouth, Glamorgan, Worcester, Leicester, Lincolnshire and Kent. As its food plant is usually some kind of vetch, its total disappearance is a complete mystery. June is its time of flight; possibly it may yet be found again in some out-of-the-way locality.

E 139 (d), (e) and (f) LONG-TAILED BLUE (*Lampides boeticus*).

In the case of this species we are dealing with a butterfly which has probably never succeeded in establishing itself, unless exceptionally for very short periods, under the peculiar climatic conditions which prevail in these islands. It is essentially an insect of warmer regions and is to be met with from Europe to Australia, in Africa and Madagascar, but not in the New World. For a species so widespread, it shows remarkably little variation, and practically no local races. Its caterpillar feeds upon a variety of species of plants belonging to the pea and bean family, and it is no doubt this lack of restriction to any particular plant amongst a natural order of plants with a very wide distribution both natural and artificial that has enabled it to range over so wide an area. For a blue it has quite a swift and masterful flight, rendering it often quite difficult to catch. In England it has seldom been met with far from the south coast, throughout the length of which odd specimens have been found now and again from 1859 onwards, never in any numbers. Its appearance generally coincides with that of many other species which are migratory in habit, and by a combination of favourable conditions have been enabled to cross the Channel.

E 140 MILKWEED BUTTERFLY (*Danais archippus*).

An even rarer visitor to our shores than the Long-tailed Blue is this handsome species belonging to a peculiarly tropical family known as the *Danaidae*. If it is wished to place this insect in the usual sequence of families, it should be inserted between the *Nymphalidae* and the *Satyridae*. It is essentially an American species, but its remarkable migratory habit has spread it within living memory over a large part of the Old World and Australia, such specimens as have from time to time reached England representing no doubt only scattered migrants. In America it is known as the Monarch Butterfly, an eminently suitable name for so fine an insect, our own name for it being based upon the foodplant of the caterpillar. It appears to breed more or less continuously throughout the year in suitable climates, but is quickly driven away by frosts, which it appears unable to survive. And in this connection many interesting discoveries have been made in recent years in America. It has been found that on the approach of cold weather the butterflies in some parts congregate together in vast swarms, and migrate southwards with the regularity of swallows. In California certain spots are known to which year after year these butterflies repair to pass the winter. And when it is remembered that these are never the same butterflies, but always the descendants of individuals which visited the spot the previous winter, the phenomenon is, indeed, remarkable.

Set E 24.

July, 1924.